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ABSTRACT

In spring 2002 staff of the Los Rios Community College District Office of Institutional Research collaborated with occupational deans, academic deans, and faculty to develop and administer a survey of former Early Childhood Education (ECE) students. The survey was designed to determine how well courses had met the needs of former ECE students who earned degrees and certificates and those who did not. Of a total of 736 surveys sent out, only 294 were returned. Tables identify the nine ECE skill areas where the majority of students thought they were prepared and two areas in which they thought they had not been well prepared. More than half, 61.8% of respondents believed that their ability to work with others as part of a team had prepared them well for employment; this was the area with the highest rating. Data are provided on the number of respondents who applied for California's Child Development Permit. Of the former ECE students who responded to the survey, 70.5% were currently working in the ECE field. Information is also provided about the demographic characteristics of former students and their average salaries. (SLD)

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A Survey of Former Early Education Childhood (ECE) Students
Summary Findings of Respondents District-wide
November 2002

Office of Institutional Research
Los Rios Community College District

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A SURVEY OF FORMER EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (ECE) STUDENTS

Summary Findings of Respondents District-wide

November 2002

During Spring 2002 staff of the Los Rios Community College District Office of Institutional Research collaborated with occupational education and academic deans and faculty to develop and administer a survey of former Early Childhood Education (ECE) students. The program specific survey was designed to determine how well courses met the needs of former ECE students, both those who earned degrees and certificates as well as those who did not. A total of 736* surveys were sent out to former students, with a total of 294 returned, for a 39.9% response rate.

Table 1: Early Childhood Education Survey Rate of Return

	Total Surveys Mailed*	Total Surveys Returned	% Returned
ARC	354	133	37.6%
CRC	215	91	42.3%
SCC	167	70	41.9%
TOTAL	736	294	39.9%

*** Adjusted for undeliverable mail.**

Highlights of the survey results follow. For more information, please refer to the more comprehensive frequency distribution reports.

Skill Areas Where the Majority of Former Early Childhood Education Students Believed They Were Very Prepared

Over half, 61.8%, of the respondents believed that their ability to work with other teachers in a team environment as a result of our ECE programs prepared them very well for employment. Other ECE skill areas, ranging from 58.7% to 56.1% of respondents who believed the courses prepared them very well, are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Early Childhood Education Skill Areas Where the Majority of Students Believed They Were Very Prepared

Rank	Early Childhood Education Skill Areas	% Very Prepared
1.	Ability to work with other teachers as a team	61.8%
2.	Ability to set-up ECE program environment (children's learning activities, etc.)	58.7%
3.	Ability to communicate and interact with parents	56.6%
4.	Ability to use Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP)	56.1%
5.	Use of observation techniques	56.1%
6.	Ability to work with children from different cultural backgrounds	55.1%
7.	Planning the indoor/outdoor environment	54.7%
8.	Manage positive behavior and resolve children's conflicts	53.8%
9.	Understand education requirements for different types of childcare jobs	51.9%

Skill Areas Where Some Former Early Childhood Education Students Believed They Were Not Prepared

Overall, students feel adequately or very prepared by their ECE courses but there were two areas where 10% or more of the respondents believed they were not prepared as illustrated in Table 3. More respondents felt they were not prepared to work with children with special needs nor were they prepared to supervise staff.

Table 3: Early Childhood Education Skill Areas Where Some Students Believed They Were Not Prepared

Rank	Early Childhood Education Skill Areas	% Not Prepared
1.	Ability to work with children with special needs	24.7%
2.	Ability to supervise staff	12.7%

The Early Childhood Education Teaching Permit Process

Although high proportions of the respondents have not yet applied or do not intend to apply for a Child Development Permit as granted by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, Table 4 illustrates the proportions of students who have applied for permits as well as the effect of cost on the process. After leaving their ECE programs, 30.9% of respondents met the requirements and are using the "Associate Teacher" permit. There were also 20.6% of respondents who met the requirements and are using the "Teacher" permit.

Table 4: Child Development Permits Granted by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing After Leaving Our College

Child Development Permit	N=	Met Requirements & Am Using	Met Requirements & Am Not Using	Yes, But Did Not Meet Requirements	Want To Apply, But Too Expensive	Have Not Yet Applied or Do Not Intend to Apply
Assistant	140	17.9%	10.7%	0.7%	4.3%	66.5%
Associate Teacher	204	30.9%	15.7%	0.5%	6.9%	46.1%
Teacher	160	20.6%	9.4%	2.5%	8.1%	59.4%
Master Teacher	127	8.7%	7.1%	1.6%	5.5%	77.2%
Site Supervisor	129	10.9%	8.5%	2.3%	2.3%	75.9%
Program Director	111	2.7%	2.7%	2.7%	3.6%	88.2%

However, there were 15.7% of respondents who applied and met the requirements for the "Associate Teacher" permit but who are not currently using the permit. In addition, there were 8.1% of respondents who want to apply for the "Teacher" permit but find it too expensive to do so. Worth noting is the 9.1% of respondents who indicated they did not understand the childcare licensing process as a result of taking our ECE courses.

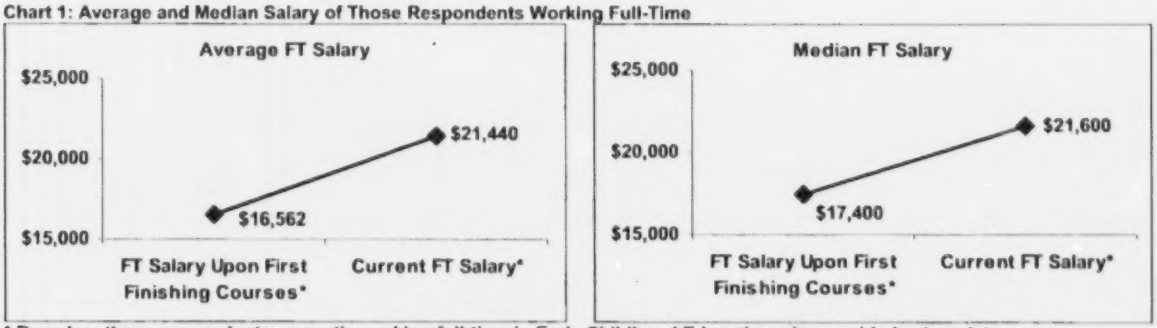
Employment and Salary Information

Of the former ECE students who responded to the survey, 70.5% are currently working in the Early Childhood Education field. Of those respondents who earned an ECE degree or certificate, 76.5% are currently working in the field compared to the 59.8% of non-degree and certificate earners. Of those who are currently employed, 42.0% are working in the public sector while 27.1% are working in the private sector. Of additional interest are the 8.4% of respondents who are currently not employed and the 7.3% who are self-employed in their own business.

While 44.9% of respondents indicated their ECE courses helped them obtain their current job, slightly higher proportions (51.4%) responded their courses helped them improve their job performance. In addition, 32.7% of former students indicated their ECE courses helped them to advance in their current job indicating that almost one-third of our former students were working in the Early Childhood Education field while attending our colleges.

Survey respondents were also asked a series of questions regarding their salary status in the ECE field. Information provided from those who are now working full-time in Early Childhood Education reveals an average full-time salary of $16,562 upon first finishing their ECE courses that increased to an average $21,440 within two years.

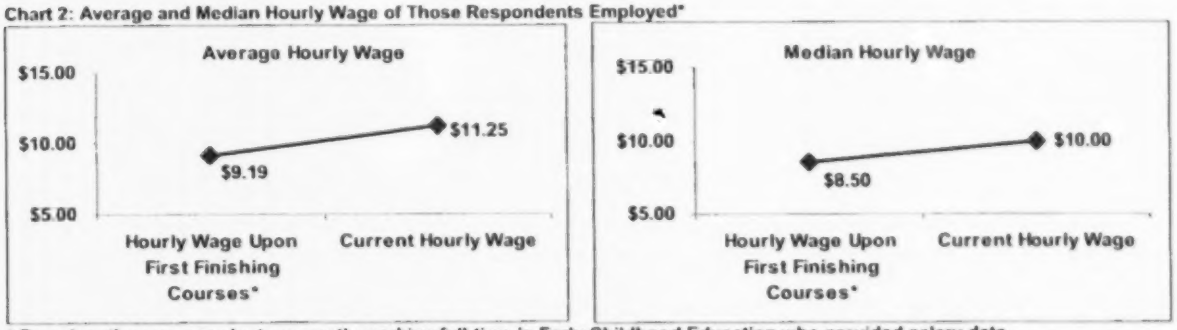
Chart 1: Average and Median Salary of Those Respondents Working Full-Time



*** Based on those respondents currently working full-time in Early Childhood Education who provided salary data.**

Of additional interest is salary information based on hourly wage data provided by survey respondents. Those currently employed in Early Childhood Education reveal an average hourly wage of $9.19 that increased to $11.25 within two years. These employed respondents indicated an average of 30.2 hours worked per week upon first finishing; this average has remained relatively unchanged over two years.

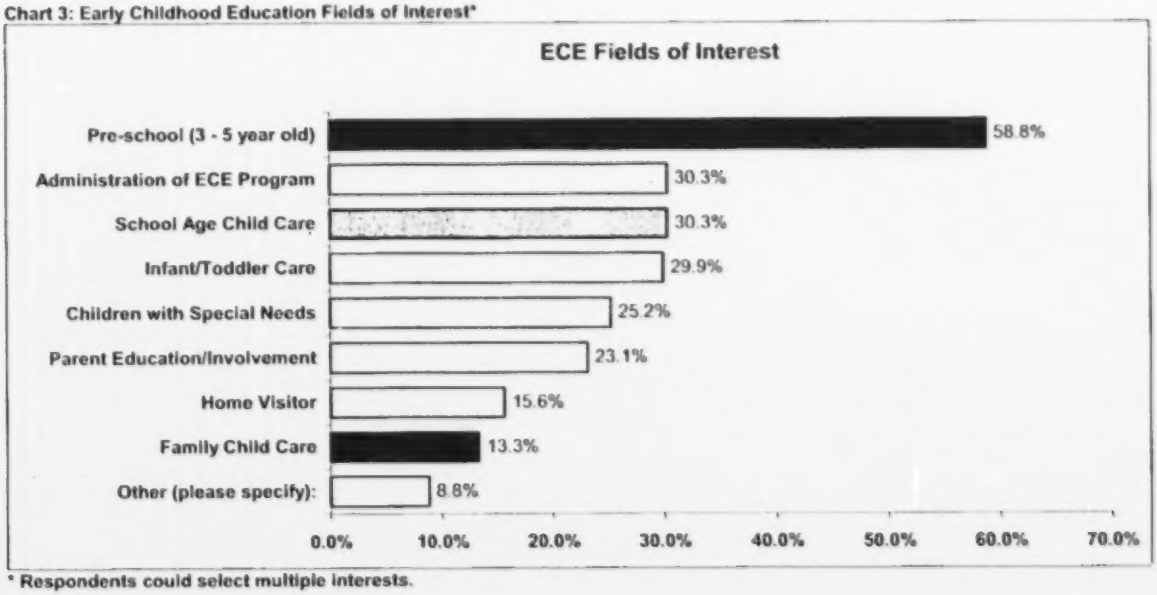
Chart 2: Average and Median Hourly Wage of Those Respondents Employed*



* Based on those respondents currently working full-time in Early Childhood Education who provided salary data.

Chart 3 provides a flavor of the multiple interests of former Early Childhood Education students within their professional field, with Pre-school (3 - 5 year olds), Administration of an ECE Program, School Age Child Care, and Infant/Toddler Child Care being the more dominant fields of interest.

Chart 3: Early Childhood Education Fields of Interest*



* Respondents could select multiple interests.

Demographic Profile

The demographic profile of the Early Childhood Education population from which the survey sample was drawn and the profile of survey respondents follow.

Table 5: Demographic Profile of Early Childhood Education Sample Population and Survey Respondents by Proportions

	Sample Population	Survey Respondents
Gender		
Female	97.0%	99.0%
Male	3.0%	1.0%
Ethnicity		
African American	16.1%	14.6%
Asian	8.7%	10.5%
Filipino	1.0%	1.4%
Latino	13.4%	11.9%
Native American	3.6%	3.4%
Pacific Islander	1.0%	1.0%
White	52.7%	53.7%
Other and Unknown	3.6%	3.4%
Age		
Under 18 years	0.2%	0.3%
18-20 years	3.6%	4.4%
21-24 years	15.0%	11.2%
25-29 years	18.7%	13.9%
30-39 years	27.5%	26.2%
40 years and over	34.9%	43.9%
By Degree Type		
Degree Earner	56.0%	63.3%
Non-Degree/Certificate Earner	44.0%	36.7%

Educational Plans and Interests

Of interest are the current and future educational plans of former Early Childhood Education students who responded to the survey:

- 46.3% of respondents are currently taking or interested in taking additional courses at a Los Rios College
- Over one-third, 36.1%, of former ECE students who responded to the survey are currently taking or are interested in taking courses at a 4-year college or university
- Over half, 59.8%, answered, yes, they would be interested in a short (about 9 hours) continuing education course related to Early Childhood Education at our colleges
- Only 14.5% of respondents indicated they would be interested in participating in an ECE program advisory committee, while 40.6% responded they might have an interest and 37.7% are not interested in participating on an advisory committee

This summary report was written by Betty Glyer-Culver, Research Analyst, LRCCD Office of Institutional Research (IR) and is based on research conducted by the "Former Student Follow-up Studies" team: research design, analysis, and report writing -- Betty Glyer-Culver, Research Analyst; Web survey and SQL Server support and development -- Minh La, IT Analyst for Institutional Research; coordination of survey mailings -- Chue Lo-Yang, Secretary. The *Former Student Follow-up Study* Team gratefully acknowledges input related to survey and report development by IR Director, Judy Beachler, program-specific question development by the occupational education and academic area deans and faculty at the colleges, and the District Office of Workforce and Economic Development under the direction of Sandy Kirschenmann for Vocational and Technical Education Act (VTEA) funds which partially supported this project in compliance with funding requirements of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998. Additional copies of this report, as well as the more comprehensive program level reports, can be downloaded from our Web Site at: http://irweb.losrios.edu or by calling 916-568-3131.

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